The A. F. of L. Weekly News Service gives news accounts and editorial interpretations of matters affecting labor occurring in the industrial, legislative, and political fields, and contains other information of benefit to the trade union movement.

AMERICAN FEDERATION OF LABOR

WEEKLY NEWS SERVICE

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WE PLEDGE—
4 BILLION DOLLARS
WAR SAVINGS BONDS
FOR VICTORY

WHOLE NO. 1640 WILLIAM GREEN, President WASHINGTON, D. C., TUESDAY, SEPTEMBER 15, 1942 GEORGE MEANY, Secretary-Treasurer VOL. 32, NO. 37

FACING the Facts

With PHILIP PEARL

We don't know whether it was just a convenient gag or whether it really happened but Donald Nelson says in last Sunday's paper that he received a letter from a worker asking whether it is patriotic to take time off from a war plant on Election Day to vote.

"There is only one answer to that question," the War Production Chief replied. "While I understand that there are those who think they should stay on the job, voting is a duty, not a privilege. The right to vote is, in short, what this war is all about.

"It should be one of the very few exceptions to the all-important rule of staying on the job and getting war materials off the production line and on the battlefronts. The exception applies to all elections, national, state or local.

"When you vote, vote fast and get back on the machine.

"The war worker is first of all an American citizen," Nelson concluded, "and the first right and duty of an American citizen is to vote. That is the difference between us and our enemies."

We agree with every word Donald Nelson said, but we think his statement should be expanded. The workers should know why this election is particularly important and why an apathetic attitude on their part now may result in bitter deprivation in the years to come.

Our Enemies Are Active

The enemies of labor are particularly busy in election years. They have lots of money to spend. They are anxious to send to Congress and the State Legislatures men who will do their bidding and vote to place labor in a straitjacket.

Elections are decided not by a majority of qualified voters, but by a majority of those who actually cast valid ballots at the polls. Every worker who neglects to vote therefore plays right into the hands of his own enemies and the enemies of American democracy.

We wouldn't get so hot and bothered about this except for the fact that all signs indicate a disgraceful attitude on the part of the average citizen toward the coming elections. Friendly Congressmen have told us that the general feeling seems to be—"This isn't a Presidential election, so why bother to vote?"

The reason is that in America the Chief Executive does not make the laws but administers them. It is Congress that makes the laws of the nation. And this year the entire House of Representatives and one-third of the United States Senate is up for election.

We have only to consider the vast flood of anti-labor legislation that was introduced at the closing session of Congress to realize how important it is for every worker to go to the polls and make certain to vote for labor's friends. Because labor had friends in Congress, the most dangerous anti-labor bills was defeated. If labor doesn't see to it at this election that labor's friends are re-elected and its enemies defeated, there may be a different and more tragic story in the next session of Congress.

Your Vote Counts

Let's face the facts. This election may result in wage freezing for American workers if they don't vote. It may bring about job freezing. It may result in the passage of no-strike laws. It might even lead to the destruction of our trade union movement.

Legislation seeking these dastardly objectives was offered in Congress this year. Portions of the Hatch bill, for the abolition of the 40-hour week, were even adopted by the House of Representatives. Labor had many close calls in the Congressional session now drawing to a close.

The only way to prevent the legal enslavement of labor in America is for every worker to exercise his right and duty as a citizen to vote on Election Day.

The way to vote is simple. Regardless of party affiliations, every worker should vote for those who support the cause of labor and against those who have manifested themselves to be enemies of labor. That is the non-partisan political policy of the American Federation of Labor. It is the policy that has brought great legislative rewards to the workers of this country.

We don't know whether a worker really sent a letter to Donald Nelson inquiring whether it was all right to take time off from a war job to vote. Regardless of that, his statement should be convincing to any worker who may entertain any doubts on that score.

To fulfill your full duty as a member of organized labor, to live up to your full duty as an American citizen, make it your business to vote on Election Day and see to it that every member of your family, who is qualified to vote, does so.

Green, Roosevelt, Eastman, Praise Street Carmen On 50th Anniversary

Washington, D. C.—AFL President William Green paid high tribute to William D. Mahon, president of the Amalgamated Association of Street, Electric Railway and Motor Coach Employes of America, on a coast-to-coast radio program celebrating the 50th anniversary of that union.

The record of this union's achievements under Mr. Mahon's leadership "is a story of human progress that should serve as an inspiration to all of us, especially in these days when we are fighting a desperate war to preserve the opportunity for progress," Mr. Green declared.

He said Mr. Mahon had become "wedded to the ideal" of bettering conditions of street car workers fifty years ago when these employes "were given less consideration than the machinery they operated."

After long and bitter struggles, the members of this union now enjoy "the highest wages and enjoy the best working conditions in the history of the industry," Mr. Green announced. He added:

"I should like to point out, in addition, that this union, the Amalgamated Association of Street, Electric Railway and Motor Coach Employes of America, pays out in benefits to its members more than a million dollars a year. Total payments to members for death, disability, old age and sick benefits now aggregate $7 million dollars.

"Furthermore, this union, despite the strenuous opposition it has encountered in its organizational work, has pioneered in stabilizing labor relations in its industry. From the beginning it has advocated arbitration of all disputes and all of its contracts with employers now contain a clause providing for such arbitration. In this way strikes and lockouts are avoided.

"Bill Mahon, in America's veteran labor leader. He has served not only the members of his own union but the entire labor movement. For twenty-five years he has been a vice president of the American Federation of Labor and has played an important role in the development of its policies and program. He has helped in innumerable ways to make America a better place to live in.

"For these reasons, voicing the unanimous sentiments of the six million members of the American Federation of Labor, I now offer my personal and official congratulations to the Amalgamated Association of Street, Electric Railway and Motor Coach Employes of America and to its stalwart president, William D. Mahon, on the fiftieth anniversary of this progressive union."

Mr. Green read to the nation-wide radio audience a tribute to the union and its members from President Roosevelt. The President's letter follows:

THE WHITE HOUSE
Washington

Dear Mr. Mahon:

Please extend my greetings to the officers and members of the Amalgamated Association of Street, Electric Railway and Motor Coach Employes of America, on the occasion of its fiftieth anniversary as the representative of the men and women employed in that mass transportation industry of the United States and Canada.

The work your members are doing day and night over the streets and highways of the nation, in fair weather and in foul, is of high importance in getting thousands of war workers to and from their jobs. Those they are enlisted in the war production fight which we are winning for our people and for their United Nations.

I know that Street, Electric Railway and Motor Coach employes in the United States and Canada will continue to do their bit in full measure for those who are fighting our fight, and that of all liberty loving people, on land, sea and in the air in all parts of the world.

Very sincerely yours,
(Signed)
FRANKLIN D. ROOSEVELT.

Mr. Mahon, speaking on the same broadcast, said the success of the union in winning their fight for recognition and progress "is due to the perseverance of the members of the union in waging their fight for recognition and progress. Another glowing tribute to the organization was paid by Joseph B. Eastman, Director of the Office of Defense Transportation.

We're the Tops!

Washington, D. C.—Secretary-Treasurer George Meany of the American Federation of Labor announced that the total dues-paid membership in the American Federation of Labor at the close of its fiscal year on Aug. 31 was 5,482,851, the highest figure in its history.

On the same date last year, the membership total was 4,569,056. Thus, the Federation has achieved a gain of almost a million members—913,535 to be exact—in the past year.

"These figures include only those-paid members in good standing," Mr. Meany emphasized. "In addition, our unions have an estimated floating membership of some 500,000, bringing our aggregate membership to six million."

Mr. Meany will submit a detailed membership and financial report to the forthcoming AFL convention in Toronto on Oct. 5.

This report discloses that some of the largest gains in membership have occurred in war industries. The metal trades unions, whose members work in shipyards, aircraft and munitions plants, made outstanding advances, especially the machinists, ironworkers and boilermakers.

Other unions which scored large membership gains included the common laborers, teamsters, carpenters, railway clerks, textile workers and seafarers. Organization advances were achieved in miscellaneous local unions directly affiliated with the Federation.

Wages of 15 to 40 Cents An Hour Paid 7,500,000 American Workers

Washington, D. C.—Nearly 20 per cent of American wage-earners are receiving less than 40 cents and many are working for as little as 15 cents an hour.

This fact protruded like a sore thumb from the report made by L. Metcalfe Walling, administrator of the Wage and Hour and Walsh-Healey Act divisions of the Department of Labor. It came while some officials and many lobbyists clamored for wage freezing and taxes to soak the poor.

At 40 cents an hour the weekly wage of this segment of the population amounts to $16, or $832 a year, providing the worker takes no time off or manages to go through a whole year without illness.

That amount, according to the report, represents the highest earnings of the 7,500,000 who are existing at the very edge or below the minimum standard of health and decency.

Only the 1,500,000 covered by the Wage and Hour law are receiving between 30 and 40 cents. In the excluded classifications wages run as low as 15 cents an hour, or $6 a week and $312 per year.

"Even for those of the 7,500,000 paid up to 40 cents an hour, or $16 at the most for a 40-hour week, it must be remembered that the rise in prices has levelled the purchasing power of their 40 cents down toward that of the 30 cents set as a minimum standard of decency when the act was passed in 1938," Administrator Walling said.

Moreover, the report shows "chiseling" employers are failing even to pay even the modest minimums required by the law. Since last December alone, 22,000 employers throughout the country violated the act by paying less and were compelled to make restitution totaling $1,250,000 to 415,000 workers.

Employees are protected not only by criminal provisions of the act, but by another section which permits underpaid workers to obtain civil suits to collect double the amount due them.

Davis, Steelman, Fenton, To Air Story of How Strikes Are Avoided

Washington, D. C.—The story of how the American Federation of Labor and Government agencies are working together to prevent strikes will be told on the next "Labor For Victo.y" radio program over a nation-wide NBC hookup at 10:15 P.M., E.W.T., on Sept. 16.

Those appearing on the program will be William H. Davis, chairman of the National War Labor Board; Dr. John R. Steelman, Director of the United States Conciliation Service and Frank Fenton, National Director of Organization for the AFL.

This is a story which has never appeared in the newspapers, which are too concerned with the few strikes that occur to give any space to the way strikes are prevented. Be sure to listen in!

Green Halts Chemical Plant Strike, Charges Company Forced Walkout

East Alton, Ill.—Prompt intervention by President William Green of the American Federation of Labor ended a strike by a local union of Federal Security Agency on the grant-in-aid program and advancing workers problems.

John F. Frey, president of the American Federation of Labor's Metal Trades Department for more than a decade, has been appointed by Administrator Paul V. McNutt as one of the labor advisers on the grant-in-aid-labor apprenticeship committee which will review current information, developments and recommend policies and procedures designed to more closely integrate training activities with the war production needs of the national war program.

Mr. Frey will be represented on this committee, to be known as the Federal Committee on Apprenticeship, by Clinton S. Golden, assistant to the president of the United Steelworkers of America. Mr. Frey and Mr. Golden are also labor members of the War Manpower Policy Committee which advises the War Manpower Commission on matters pertaining to mobilization and utilization of workers for war.

William L. Batt, president of the S.K.F. Industries of Philadelphia, and Channing R. Dooley, manager of Industrial Relations, Socony-Vacuum Oil Company of New York, are the labor representatives appointed.

Currently Mr. Batt is serving as vice chairman of the War Production Board, of which Donald M. Nelson is chairman, and Mr. Dooley is the head of the Training-Within-Industry branch of the War Manpower Commission.

In addition to labor and management representatives, officials of three government agencies will serve on Mr. McNutt's committee as consultants. They are Mrs. Clara M. Beyer, assistant director of the Division of Labor Standards, who will represent the U. S. Department of Labor; Layton S. Hawkins, chief of the trade and industrial service, the Office of Education, and William F. Patterson, chief, apprentice-training service, the Federal Security Agency.

All members of Mr. McNutt's Committee served on the Federal Committee on Apprenticeship which advised the Secretary of Labor from 1934 until the apprentice-training service was transferred to the Federal Security Agency by the President's order creating the War Manpower Commission.

Frey Appointed On Apprenticeship Committee to Advise WMC and FSA

Washington, D. C.—The American Federation of Labor will help advise the War Manpower Commission and Federal Security Agency on the grant-in-aid-labor apprenticeship committee which will review current information, developments and recommend policies and procedures designed to more closely integrate training activities with the war production needs of the national war program.

Action on the matter was announced on this committee, to be known as the Federal Committee on Apprenticeship, by Clinton S. Golden, assistant to the president of the United Steelworkers of America. Mr. Frey and Mr. Golden are also labor members of the War Manpower Policy Committee which advises the War Manpower Commission on matters pertaining to mobilization and utilization of workers for war.

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News Briefs

GREEN HOPEFUL ON PEACE PARLEYS

Cleveland, Ohio. — William Green, president of the American Federation of Labor, said he was "hopeful of concrete results this winter" in the joining forces with the Congress of Industrial Organizations.

"Preliminary exploration will be necessary in the early stages," he declared. "There is much ground to cover, but our committee is ready for a sincere endeavor to bring the two great houses of labor together."

Unity conference between officials of the AFL and the CIO will be held late this month.

Green was the principal speaker at the opening sessions of the national conventions of the Journeymen Plumbers and Steamfitters Union (AFL) and the Heat and Frost Insulators and Asbestos Workers Union (AFL).

He urged the unions to "exercise great restraint to avoid strikes which violate your wartime pledges" and said "we must resort only to peaceable means of settling our disputes until victory has been achieved."

PARTIAL JOBLESS BENEFITS SET UP IN NEW YORK STATE

Albany, N. Y.—The Division of Placement and Unemployment Insurance, State Department of Labor, has revised its procedures and operating methods in preparation for the advent of unemployment insurance benefits for partial unemployment which become payable after November 1 and November 30 of this year, according to Milton O. Loysen, Executive Director of the Division.

"We have set up what is technically known as a 'waiting-week' plan," continued Mr. Loysen. "This plan entails measuring employment in terms of individual days, instead of weeks of five consecutive days. It makes it possible for workers who are seeking and willing and able to work to qualify for benefits, provided they do not earn more than $24 a week.

SHORT-LINE RAILROADS URGED TO RAISE WAGES

Washington, D. C.—An Emergency Railway Labor Board recommended adjustment of wage and vacation schedules for some employes of thirty short-line railroads, refrigerator companies and a contractor providing services normally performed by railroads, to bring them into line with standards set up for most of the nation's rail carriers.

The employes involved, the emergency board said in a report to President Roosevelt, are chiefly maintenance-of-way and shop craft workers.

SHIPYARD WORKERS WIN COMMENDATION FROM NAVY

Washington, D. C.—Salvage and repair of the fire-blackened USS Pratt at an East Coast port is a striking example of the resourcefulness, determination and efficiency of Uncle Sam's shipyard workers, the Navy Department announced.

The destroyer tender caught fire May 27 while taking on supplies at a dock in Argentia, Newfoundland, and burned fiercely for nearly five hours. Flames were finally confined to an East Coast port and repaired.

RAILWAY PATROLMEN HOLD CONVENTION

Cleveland, O.—The convention of the National Council of Railway Patrolmen, Brotherhood of Railroad Clerks, and Phil Hannah, secretary-treasurer, Ohio State Federation of Labor.

Indianapolis, Ind., was chosen as the convention city when Joseph Gillis, organizer, AFL, of Baltimore, was elected president. Other officers elected are: Executive vice-president, Lawrence Farmer, Upper Darby, Pa.; secretary-treasurer, J. J. Hornung, Toledo, Ohio. The country was divided in 5 districts and 10 vice-presidents were elected to supervise organization. Resolutions supporting the war program and greater organization of railroad policemen were adopted.

LADIES HANDBAG UNION WINS CLOSED SHOP PACT

New York, N. Y.—The International Ladies' Handbag, Luggage, Belt and Novelty Workers Union scored a big victory in Kansas City, Mo., when the Lace Frame Company, one of the largest luggage firms in the country, employing about 400 workers, signed a closed shop union contract with Local No. 66 of the international union after a struggle of a year's duration.

Union officials said the provisions of the contract in addition to the closed shop provision include seniority for all workers, minimum wages ranging from $16 a week for beginners to $25 a week for those employed in the trade for two years, one week's vacation with pay and arbitration of all disputes.

New AFL Bill Extends Security To Six Million More Americans

Washington, D. C.—Rep. Thomas to M. Eliot (D., Mass.) introduced in the House new amendments to the Social Security Act sponsored by the American Federation of Labor.

"The purpose of these amendments," AFL President William Green explained, "is to extend the coverage of social security to millions of Americans not now included, to increase and widen benefits so that workers can be protected against post-war unemployment and to prevent inflation by increasing the tax contributions by workers to Social Security funds.

"The whole power of the American Federation of Labor and its six million members will be enlisted in support of this vital measure."

The bill introduced by Rep. Eliot, who formerly served as counsel for the Social Security Board—

1—Extends the coverage of old age insurance to six million agricultural workers, domestic servants, self-employed persons and others now not within the scope of the act.

2—Increases the amount of old age benefits (the increases range from $1.50 to $8 a month, depending on the individual's earnings).

3—Extends benefits in the same amount as old age insurance to workers disabled for more than six months, except where such disablement is due to occupational injury in which case the workers are entitled to workmen's compensation under existing laws. It also protects the claims to old age and survivors' insurance which are now lost through disability.

4—Federalizes unemployment insurance under a uniform system of benefits, including a 26 week period which insurance is paid, reduction of the waiting period before which workers become eligible.

5—Workers disabled for less than six months, except through occupational injury, would get benefits equivalent to unemployment compensation.

6—Provides additional and increased unemployment and disability benefits for workers' dependents, as well as maternity benefits.

7—Sets up a system of hospitalization benefits.

8—The Social Security tax upon workers would be increased by 2 per cent now, and as much as 3 per cent by 1940, with equal contributions from employers.

9—Provides for the payment of unemployment compensation to soldiers discharged from military service after the war, until they find employment, but not to exceed a year by the Federal Government out of general revenue.

10—Makes legal provision for a permanent national employment service.

Vichy Decree Drafts Frenchmen To Slave in German Factories

London.—France was mobilized to work for Germany under a decree of the Vichy Government requiring all Frenchmen and Colonials from 18 to 50 and all unmarried Frenchwomen from 21 to 35 to work "to facilitate the execution of any task the Government judges necessary in the superior interests of the nation."

In an official explanation, the Vichy Government admitted the decree was intended to provide workers for German war industry under an agreement which would bring home one French prisoner of war for every three specialists sent to work in the Reich. Despite every effort of the Vichy government, Frenchmen have been most reluctant to volunteer.

It was understood here that "measures had been taken" to avoid disturbances which might arise over the new decree, with police troops mounting guard over government buildings. In Vichy, Berlin broadcasts said a new decree in the official Gazette had brought all military police under the command of Pierre Laval, chief of the government.

A Belgian workman, one of many Belgians deported to work in a German factory, says the conditions there are worse than words can describe. Women refused to work. They were immediately marched off to a forced labor camp where they had to work from dawn to dusk, were scarcely given any time to eat, and were constantly beaten.

Details of an alien's obligations under the new French Labor Draft laws are to be published later, but foreigners living in France will come under these laws.

Thousands of Aircraft Workers Adopt Payroll War Savings Plan

Washington, D. C.—In a five-day labor-management drive at the Lockheed-Vega Aircraft Corporation in Burbank, Calif., more than 97 percent of the 60,000 employees signed up in the payroll war savings plan to set aside 10% or more of the company's gross payroll for War Bonds every payday. This result was achieved through the teamwork of the company and the International Association of Machinists, Local No. 727.

In congratulatory messages to the union and the company Secretary Morgenthau commended management on the 10 percent goal "a victory in our battle on the home front," and added "your government is proud of you."

The Lockheed achievement was the most spectacular of a number of War Bond labor-management campaigns reporting programs in aircraft, railroad, rubber, hosiery and other industries.

In a joint drive in Seattle the Boeing Aircraft Company and the Aero Mechanics' Union, Local 751, AFL, secured the participation of 94 percent of the company's 32,000 employees in the payroll war savings plan, for a total of 10.4 percent of gross payroll.

Musicians Union Reveals Facts About Limit on Recorded Music

New York City.—Local 802, American Federation of Musicians, was forced to take paid advertisements in the New York newspapers to tell the public the union's story, which the press has refused to print in news columns at the request of James C. Petrillo's banning of recording.

Exploding the lies against Petrillo, the ad-men declare:

"The fact is that Brother Petrillo is but carrying out the unanimous decision of our international executive board. The latter, in turn, is carrying out the unanimous decision of the 618 duly elected delegates who attended our 60th national convention which expressed the will of the entire membership."

Explaining why only 35 percent of the 138,000 AFM members are steadily employed, the ad says:

"Do you know that 95 percent of the music heard today in the United States and Canada is canned?—that only one musician out of every hundred is employed by living musicians?

"There are approximately 600 radio stations in the United States, but 500 of these do not employ one single living musician. They operate exclusively on recorded music. There are approximately 500,000 coin-operated phonographs in our country. The total income from this source alone is around $150,000,000 annually.

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UNION EXISTS 44 YEARS WITH NO-STRIKE RECORD

New Brighton, Pa.—Management and union employes of a war production plant here celebrated an enviable record—44 years of friendly and peaceful relations without a sign of trouble.

The union is Horse Nail Makers Union, No. 7075, chartered in 1898 by the American Federation of Labor, whose members work for the Standard Horse Nail Corporation.

The company, which employs several hundred workers, makes machine keys, horse nails, ferrules, tacks, brads, boxnails and other steel specialties needed in war production.

G. B. Sheers, vice president and general manager of the corporation, said there hasn't been the remotest suggestion of a strike since the company entered into collective bargaining relations with the union in 1898.

Many of the charter members of the union are still employed by the company and a majority of these average more than seventy-eight years of age. A number of present employes have succeeded their fathers in the same positions.

Besides the Federal local, the AFL International Association of Machinists also holds an agreement covering members employed at the plant.

PRODUCTION INCENTIVE UNIT SET UP BY NAVY

Washington, D. C.—The Navy Department has established a Production Incentive Division in charge of Admiral G. H. Woodward. The new division has services available to joint Labor-Management War Production Drive Committees paralleling for the Navy those also offered through War Production Drive Headquarters by the Army.

Admiral Woodward has authorized War Production Drive Headquarters to call for all labor-management committees participating in the War Production Drive the services of the Production Incentive Division. On any of these services, except as may be otherwise specified, committees should direct their requests to the Incentive Division, Navy Department, 2118 Massachusetts Avenue N. W., Washington, D. C.

NO MANPOWER SHORTAGE IN WEST, KAISER SAYS

Washington, D. C.—Henry J. Kaiser, the West Coast shipbuilder, here at talk of manpower shortages.

"I've got 130,000 men working for me and I have jobs. Last year I had only 3,000.

"There's no shortage of manpower in the West. There may be shortages of skilled labor. That's why we have a training program. That's the solution to the manpower question. There are lots of people who aren't working in important industries.

"The labor problem will be taken care of by labor and by the people of America."